

SEA LETTER

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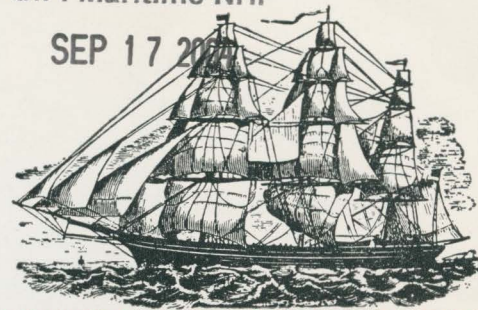
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RELIC SALVAGE...Schooner FORESTER

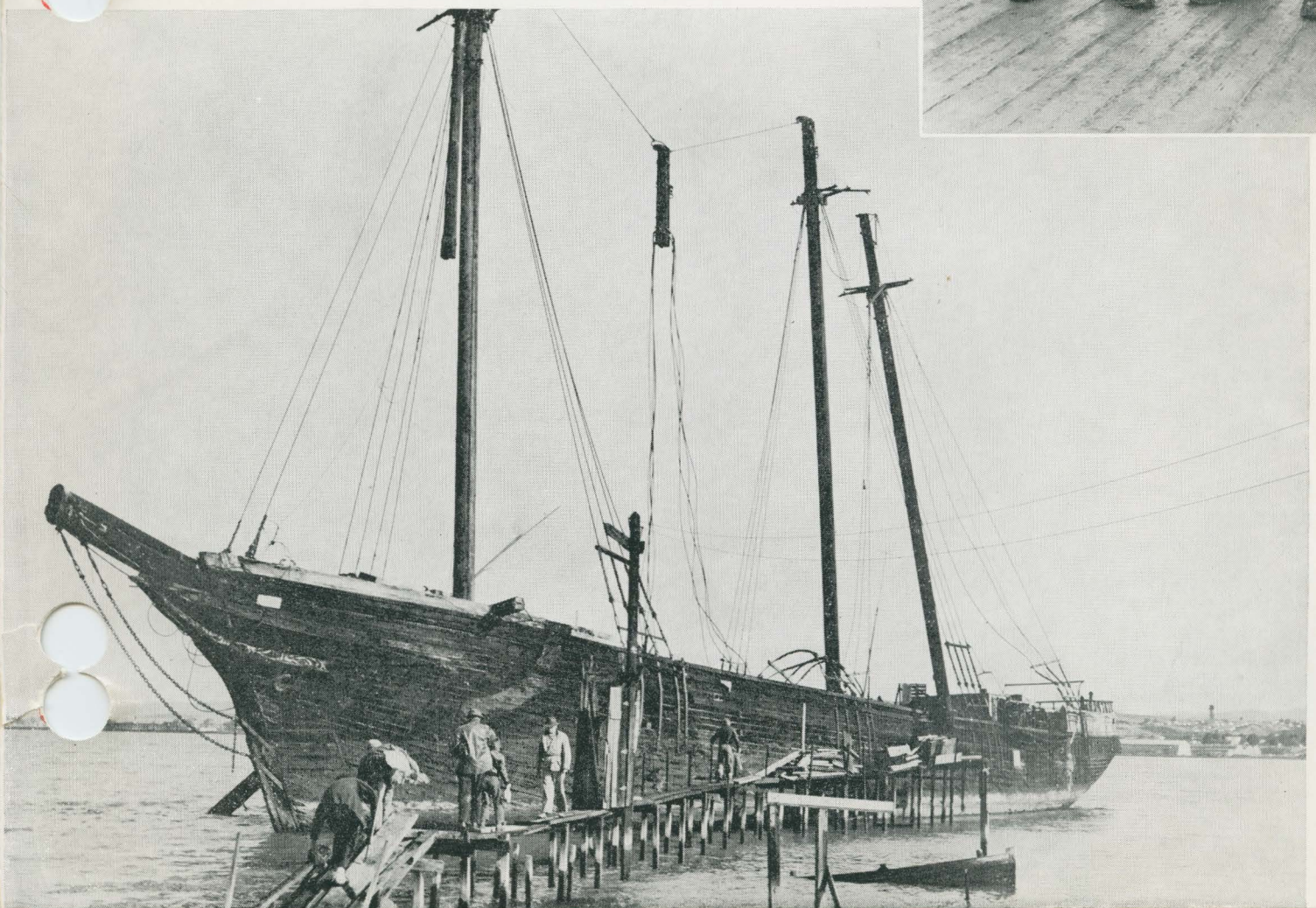
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The FORESTER was the last intact topmast schooner on the Pacific Coast and her fittings are a rare trove of locally built wooden sailing ship method and style. To salvage and preserve these relics was the objective of a six weeks' expedition undertaken by the Maritime Museum.

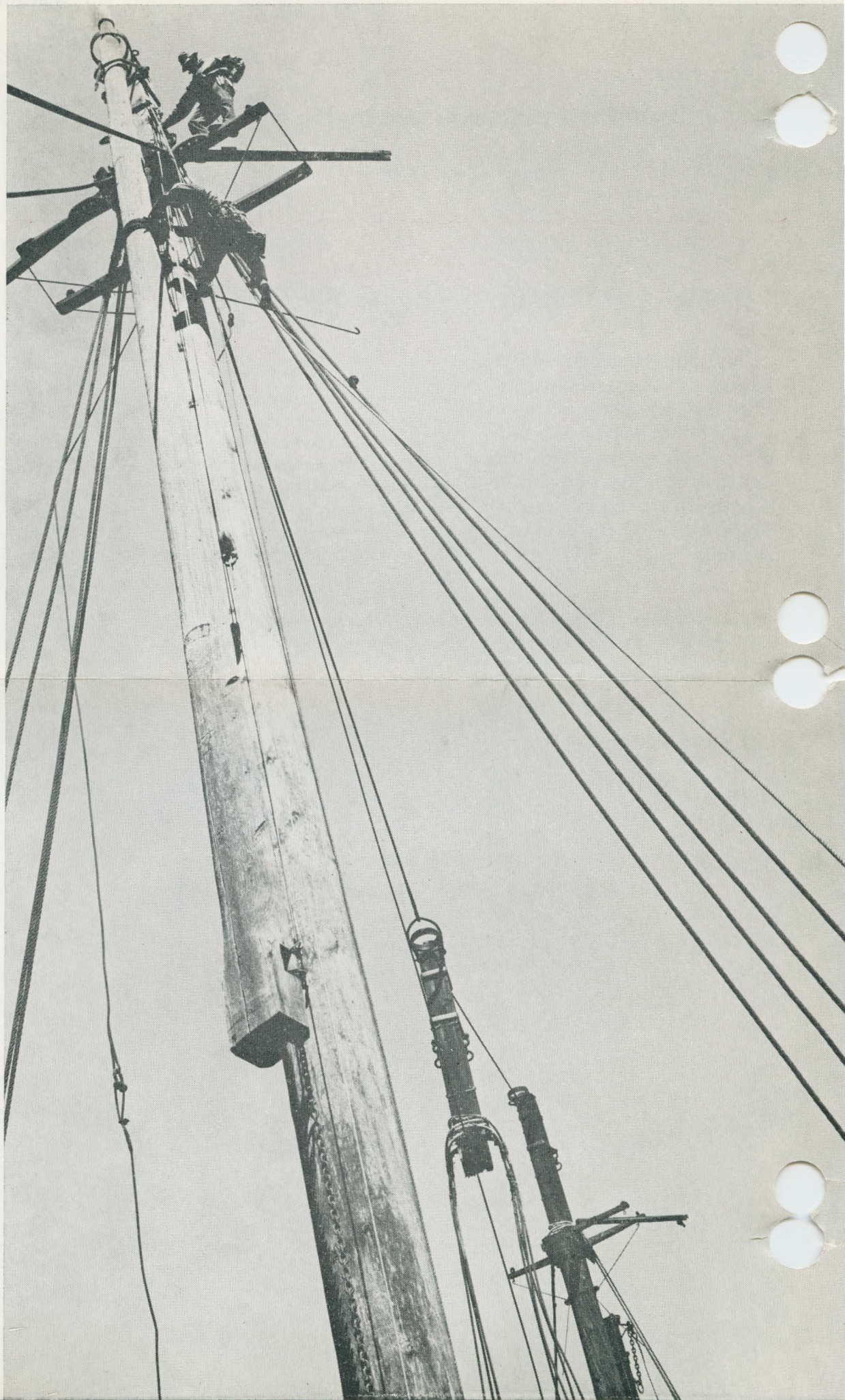
Captain Otto Daeweritz, on the deck of his beached schooner, mulls an offer from an Eastern ship broker to send the FORESTER to sea again. The date of the photograph is 1941 when the war in Europe had created a bottom shortage that gave new value to what wooden windjammers were left.

Photograph by Karl Kortum

The work begins . . . The museum crew bring their gear aboard through the mud and along the plank walk-way. Dry rot aloft and teredoes below have already carried away the main mast.



William Bart and Ib Riis reeve a mast rope to lower the foretopmast in a safe and seamanlike manner. The foremast was felled on deck to facilitate salvage work.



The 184' four-masted schooner FORESTER was built in Alameda in 1900 by Hay & Wright for the lumber and copra trade to the South Sea Islands. The new schooner was placed under command of a young shipmaster named Otto Daeweritz, a native of Czechoslovakia, who owned one-third of 64 shares in the schooner. After the FORESTER's last voyage in 1932 he bought out his

partners for \$8,000 and continued to live aboard and care for his old vessel in Oakland Creek and Carquinez Straits.

Captain Daeweritz took the FORESTER to sea on her maiden voyage, stayed with her through her long life on the high seas, and died aboard her at Martinez in 1947 at the age of 83.

The care and preservation of the

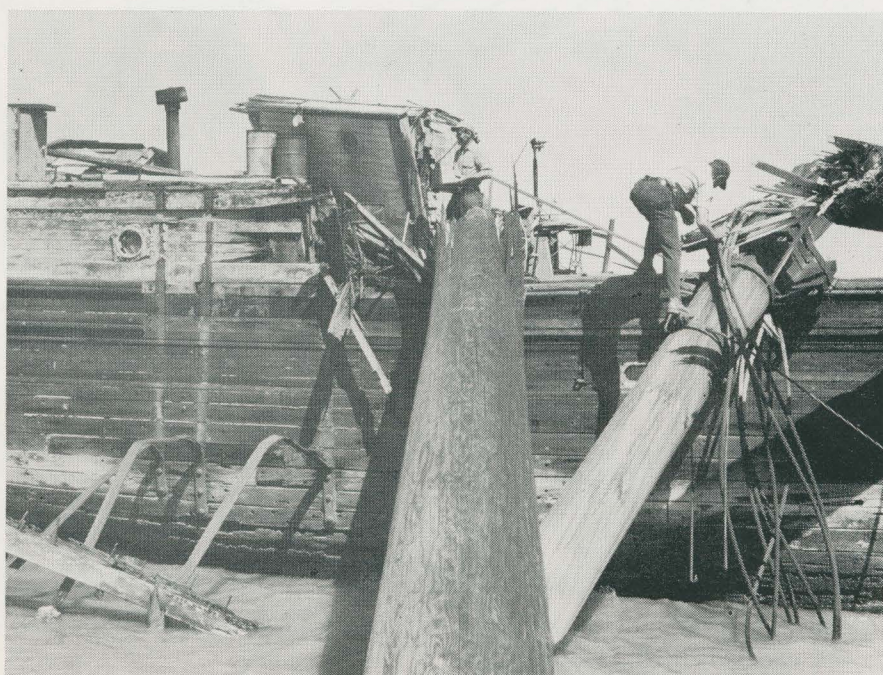
old vessel has been carried on by her present owner, Mr. Charles Fitzgerald, who so zealously protected her from souvenir hunters and other agents of destruction that the museum crew even recovered the two-decked basket in which Captain Daeweritz's meals were carried aft by the cook. It was through Mr. Fitzgerald's courtesy that the Maritime Museum was



The foremast is down . . . now the iron work and rigging must be removed, identified and marked for later reconstruction in the museum as a full-scale, complete and authentic mast doubling.



Crash! . . . the mizzen-mast splashes into the water, shattering at the rail, followed by the toppling spanker mast. Rigger Ib Riis (far right) has just triggered the fall by cutting the last shroud with his hacksaw.



The mizzen and spanker masts lie across the rail in a classic reenactment of a dismasting at sea.

granted the opportunity to undertake this expedition. This was an arduous task carried out by BAL-CLUTHA's crew under the direction of William Bartz.

Most important, the complete foremast doubling had to be saved intact and undamaged. It will form a prominent exhibit some 20 feet high, showing how the topmast was attached to the huge lower mast-head with all attendant rigging—a West Coast schooner mast doubling complete.

The topmast was lowered by Bartz and Ib Riis under the direction of Al Hatt, and most of the rigging removed aloft. Next the

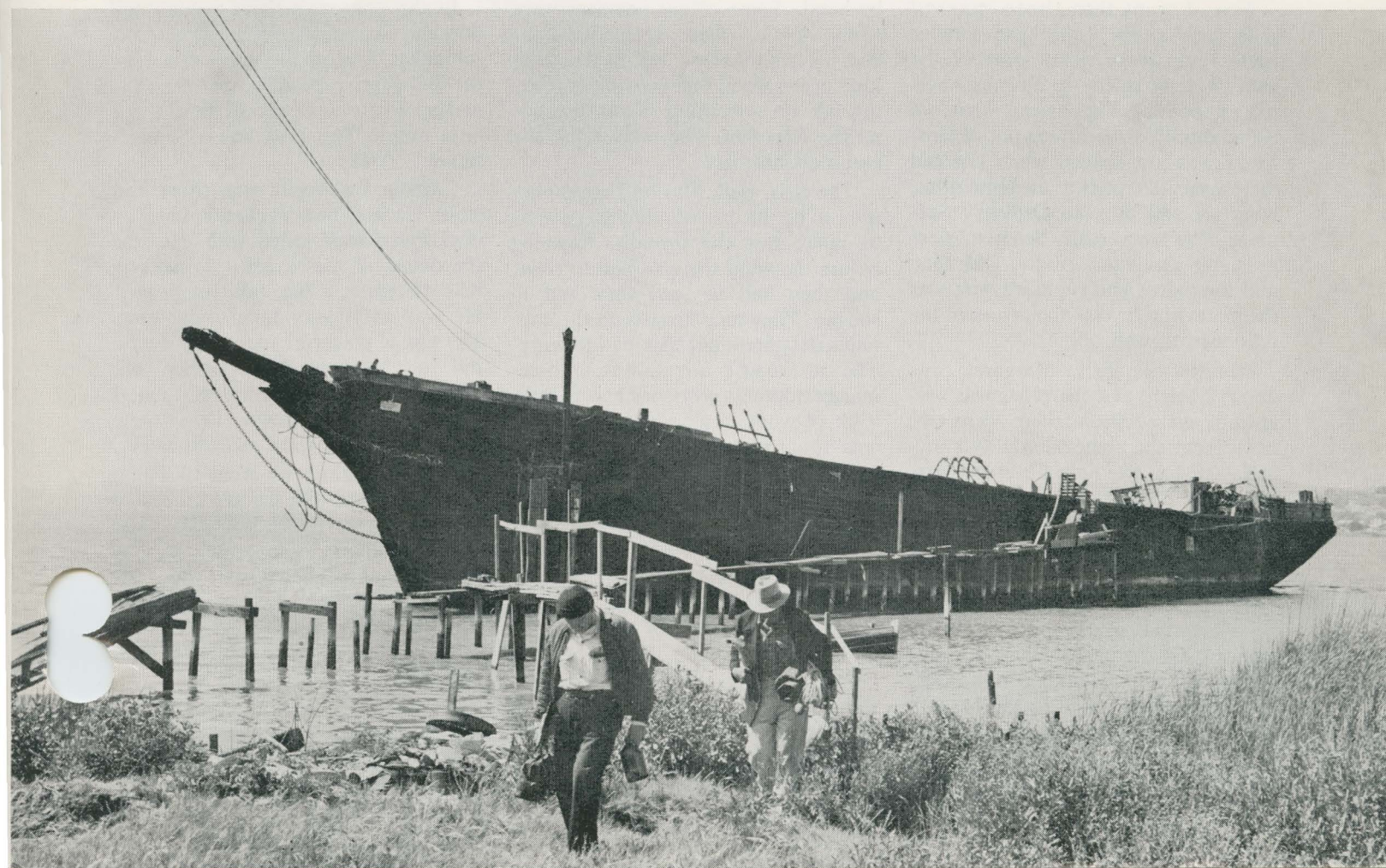
great lower mast—102' tall and 28" in diameter—was felled by hacksaw and axe, and the thick shrouds cut by hacksaw. Great frozen bolts were loosened and heavy mastbands pried loose after being in place for 62 years. Trestle trees and cross trees, and their fittings, were removed along with appropriate lengths of wire shrouds and stays. The mizzen and spanker masts were similarly felled over the side and securely lashed alongside to prevent their becoming a menace to navigation.

Next came the deck gear with which the ship was controlled. The main fife rail, to which the running

rigging was secured, and the pump flywheel were dismantled. Steering wheel and worm mechanism were taken apart and the rudder head sawed off. Forward fife rail, cat-head, taffrail and even hen coop followed.

But the task was only half complete. Everything that would float was hoisted overboard at high tide and towed to a convenient dock for loading. Everything else was carried and dragged through the mud at low tide for transport to the museum. And yet to come is the re-assembly, display and interpretation of these relics of the last days of merchant sail.

"Leave her, Johnny, leave her." . . . The masts are down, tons of gear have been carried, dragged, or floated ashore, and the decks are cleared and secure. Obviously weary, Henry Rusk and Al Hatt trudge through the mud for the last time, leaving old FORESTER to her fate.



Oscar Gonzales speaking:

A recollection of life aboard the FORESTER by Mr. Oscar Gonzales.

The museum is engaged in a continuing project to interview old time seafaring men whose experiences and recollections would otherwise be forgotten.

The urgency of this program is impressed upon us because many times an interesting prospect for an interview could no longer be found or had passed away.

The museum is privileged to publish these excerpts from Mr. Gonzales' narrative which graphically describe his recollections of life aboard the FORESTER in her prime—and the epicurean Captain Daeweritz. This is the only known account on the subject.

That Mr. Gonzales does not hold with the old superstition that women are bad luck aboard ship is manifest from his delightful description of sailing on a three-masted "family" merchant schooner.

I WAS BORN in Puerto Rico and I first sailed as cook in two masted schooners there. These little vessels only carried four men, six at the most. You worked cargo as well as the ship. They used to load salt. The salt was in bulk and when the schooner reached San Juan we used to sack it in the hold as we discharged it. I sailed in the RIO and the PETRA, and the SANTA MARIA.

Next I went into three-masted schooners in the Caribbean lumber trade. I was in the ANNIE AINSLEY, the ESTHER E. BOYINGTON, and the MARGARET DOYLE. They were what we called family owned ships out of Boston. I was just sixteen when I joined the MARGARET DOYLE, an apprentice, what we call now an Ordinary Seaman. The two Able Seamen were girls, the daughters of the Old Man and the mate. The captain's wife was the mate, and he was the owner of the schooner, as well.

One of the girls, Margaret, was about sixteen, and the other was seventeen. In addition, there were two boys from the same family and myself—I was the only Ordinary Seaman. The cook was the mate's sister. It was one big family. I slept forward by the donkey boiler, all the rest slept in the after quarters.

I made about four trips in the MARGARET DOYLE, out to Puerto Padre and to Guantanamo Bay, both in Cuba. We carried lumber in the hold and on deck. We had to discharge it ourselves out of two hatches, no bow

ports. We used to get a sling load together by hand, take a turn of the fall around the niggerhead, and zzzzz, out it went, one man pulling the guy to swing it around onto the dock.

They used the donkey engine for discharging and to raise the anchor—only once in awhile to make sail. The Old Man didn't like to waste wood or coal for that when it could be done by hand. Some of our passages were from Mobile, where we loaded lumber, to Haiti where we loaded that kind of log wood that is used for making ink or something. Short lengths, maybe four feet. The natives put the cargo aboard here.

The girls, well, Marion I remember used to be the one who had to go aloft to make fast the topsails. Running before the wind the girls had to steer, and they had to sew, they had to sougee. They may have been the captain's daughters but they had to work. The MARGARET DOYLE was a three-masted topmast schooner and there is a lot of work in a vessel like that. It was from those two girls that I learned to splice; they were my teachers.

I was in Mobile, in a boarding house, when a bunch of us were sent to Orange, Texas, to join a sixteen hundred ton five-masted auxiliary schooner that had just been launched there. She was called the CITY OF ORANGE. Orange is a little place near Galveston. This schooner was a monster compared to what I had been in before, and she also had gasoline en-

gines. The engines broke down and we put in to Key West. But she was built to sail, the engine was only for emergency. We went on to Gibraltar under sail—this must have been about 1917. At Gibraltar we got orders to proceed to Genoa and discharge our cargo of lumber. Here the vessel was sold and we were all sent back to Baltimore as passengers in a steamer.

I picked up a Limey ship in Baltimore and I paid off in Marseilles.

A New Zealand ship called the OPEEHE came in to Marseilles short one A. B. and I joined her. In New Zealand I tried to sail on the coast, but they wouldn't allow that because I was a foreigner. So the Consul put me on the American four-mast schooner FORESTER. I joined her in Christchurch, the port is Lyttelton. The schooner was unloading gasoline and lumber. The gasoline was in cases, in those days the gasoline was usually in five-gallon cans, two to a case.

In the FORESTER there was a captain and two mates, no bosun and no sailmaker. Everybody was sailmaker; the Old Man, especially, was the sailmaker. There were six A. B.'s, three on a watch. The cook was a Spanish fellow, I think.

Captain Daeweritz was short and stout. He was the best captain in those days that I ever sailed with. He was the owner of the vessel. Armstrong was the mate, a big, tall, tough guy. He was very, very tough, and how. He was a powerful man, but if you did your work he didn't bother you. The second mate was an old man, I can't remember his name. That's quite a few years ago, 1919 as I remember.

From Lyttelton we went to Tahiti in ballast, sand. We shoveled the sand into barrels and it was hoisted out and dumped ashore. The FORESTER had an old donkey engine, and the mate used to fire it up. Let's see, I don't think it was fired, I think it was gasoline driven. A gasoline donkey to hoist sail and up anchor.

In Tahiti we were about ten days loading copra. The natives did the

loading. They carried the copra in baskets, and dumped it in the hold, a big line of them coming in and out, merry-go-round. Women, children—everybody loaded the FORESTER.

There was no trouble with the cargo on the voyage. Just the bugs. The copra bugs used to bother us during the night. They crawl all over and they bite, but the bother is their crawling on you, on your body. We only had rationed water in those days. A bucket of fresh water every Saturday for washing clothes and taking a bath. We used to take a bath in salt water every day, but salt water gets sticky, especially in the tropics.

We used to go swimming on very calm days; we used to drop ropes over the side and go swimming in the ocean. We struck calms on the line, and must have crossed it three or four times. The wind would pick up and push us ahead and then during the day we would drift back. Just the same, we made it up from Tahiti finally in something like thirty days—not bad.

The FORESTER carried a big pig by the name of Susie. That pig weighed about six or seven hundred pounds. She had two litters, one on the way out before I joined the schooner and one on the way back. Because there was a male pig aboard, too. Those two were in one cage, and the little ones we used to put in different corrals. The four-to-eight watch took care of the pig pens. Wash it down, and at nighttime wash it down, too, and lay some hay or something in there for the pigs to sleep on. During the daytime, in the tropics, someone would throw water on the pigs because they were so fat they might have suffocated in the heat.

The food was very good for those days. We used to get fresh pork twice a week and eggs every other day. We used to get salt pork the rest of the time, and salt beef. The FORESTER was the first ship I was ever in where we had fresh eggs every other day. First sailing ship, that is. That was because we had about five dozen chickens on board. Chickens and roosters. The pig sty was between the fore and the main masts at the after part of the forward house. The chicken coops were between the main and the mizzen.

The cook dressed the chickens and the mate he used to kill the pigs on

Saturday morning with the help of the watch. There was fresh pork roast on Saturday. We had a very good cook, a good baker, and he used to make good bread. Of course, he didn't give it to us fresh; the Old Man wouldn't stand for it unless it was three or four days old. According to the bread we get today, that was very good bread.

We had three meals a day, but no coffee time in those days, just coffee or tea at the mealtimes. Typical breakfast was salt fish, herring, and boiled potatoes, and coffee. Of course, corn meal or oatmeal was served on other days. For lunch it was pea soup and codfish in the family way, you know, boiled and they fry bacon and throw it on top. And boiled potatoes or a little rice. The food was passed from the galley to the room next to it where we used to eat. Then the cook used to make a basket of food and go aft with that.

He used to give us, during the week, like on a Saturday, half a pound of jam, half a pound of butter, a pound of sugar, so much tea, and then the coffee. In the morning watch, when you got up, there was no coffee. Because the galley was closed; in those days they didn't believe in leaving coffee or anything else around. At five o'clock you got coffee.

In the FORESTER we had a table in the fo'c'sle; it used to pull down into place and then lift up, out of the way, between meals. There were two fo'c'sles, one on each side of the ship, three bunks in each. The cook and messboy had quarters in the forward house. The mates, of course, lived aft. The FORESTER had foot ropes for the jib boom and there was a headrail on either side that we used because she didn't have any toilets.

In FORESTER we worked the ship all the time, painting and sougeeing. We used to lash the wheel if she was steering by the wind and everybody go to work—sougeeing. Twice a week we had to sougee all over, the houses, the bulwarks. If it was calm, we would be sent up to scrape the masts and oil them.

The jibs in her we hoisted by hand. But the larger sails, the fore, main, mizzen, and spanker, we used to hoist with the halliards led to the niggerheads and use power. If the halliard wouldn't reach the niggerhead, we

would use a messenger. Hoisting by hand, we would sing chanteys.

At that time I was young, you know, and I was kind of tough. There was a German-Brazilian aboard by the name of Shills. We were on different watches—the two watches used to change with the dog watch. Well, Shills and I didn't get along. So the captain said, "You two boys can't get along; tomorrow you will have to make a decision . . ."

Shills was coming on deck, and I was going below. So before I went to bed we had to fight for an hour and twenty minutes. The Captain was Shills' referee and the mate was my referee. Every time somebody got a wallop we just dipped our head in a barrel of salt water we always kept there. Before breakfast, an hour and twenty minutes fight!

From there on the ship was in peace and Shills was a friend of mine. We used to sit down on the bow, on the fo'c'sle head, after the dog watch, after supper, and sing. We used to play the guitar there, pass the time.

It was a good passage in the old FORESTER. Calm weather, very nice weather, a little fresh before we hit the coast. They towed us in to San Francisco, which I saw for the first time—I think it must have been the Red Stack. We went to Oakland and there we paid off. The A.B.'s wages was \$60, plus fifty per cent, \$90. That was the largest wage paid before the War. After No. 1 War the wages fell off. And later on, in 1921, we lost the strike.

In 1929 I was sailing from here, from this coast to the East Coast in AMERICAN HAYWIRE, for \$36, bosun. That's terrible. You had to take it or leave it. And you had to produce. There it was not so easy as I tell the young fellows today: "You got the tables set, you got the best now, you are living better than the captains and commodores in the olden days."

In later years I was working for the Associated Oil Co. I was on the barges and on the ships. I was in the TULSA GAS, the BRERETON, the little one that they sold to Alaska, I forget her name, and then the DRUMM and the PAUL SHOUP. I saw the FORESTER up the river, as we passed in the tankers. She was on the mud—I used to pity her.

SAN FRANCISCO

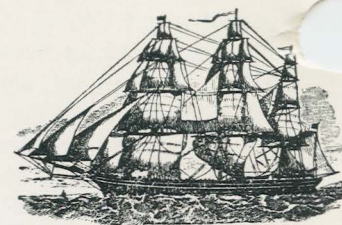
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SEA LETTER



BASIL KNAUTH, *Editor*

RETURN GUARANTEED

RIPTIDES

A Rainy Sunday Afternoon

By ROBERT O'BRIEN

A couple of months ago, I took the family for a ride. We crossed the bay from Marin county on the San Quentin ferry, drove along the Sacramento highway to Pinole, and then to Martinez. Crossing Carquinez strait on the Benicia ferry, you could look back and see her lying there in the sedge of the tidelands, a little west of Martinez town.

The skipper of the ferry was a jovial man named Captain Jansen, a Cape Codder by birth and on the Benicia ferry run since the early 20s. Above the wind that whipped through the strait, I shouted through the open window of the wheelhouse and asked him what she was.

"Lumber schooner. Been tied up there for years. Go over and talk to her skipper some time. He lives on board her."

"Thanks," I replied. "I will."

The other day, I drove back to Martinez, crossed the railroad tracks and bumped and swayed down a wet, muddy road. I parked the car as close to the schooner as the road would take me, and struck off on a path across the flats toward the water's edge. A cold, west wind was blowing, driving the rain clouds up from San Pablo bay and piling them up in the sky to the east. The path ended in a narrow plank walk leading out over the water to the side of the ship, and the walk ended at a locked door on which was the sign, "Beware of the Dog." I pushed the bell button and waited.

A few minutes later, Captain Otto Daeweritz, skipper of the schooner FORESTER, led the way down into the after cabin of the ship. "One thing," he said over his shoulder, "I'm not bothered by noisy neighbors."

He was a short, stocky man, coatless in spite of the cold, and wearing a knitted sailor's cap. He had started going to sea

in 1879, was 83, and, like most men who have lived alone for many years, reluctant to talk about himself or his life. He had a lively, brown and white pit bull puppy which, when it caught the scent of my German shepherd on my clothes, was instantly and eagerly friendly.

Captain Daeweritz made the puppy lie down, and got out some old photographs, and told me about his ship. She was launched November 10, 1900, at the Hay & Wright yards in Alameda, and as far as he knows is the only four-master left in the Bay Area. She went immediately into the offshore lumber trade for the San Francisco exporting firm of Sanders & Kirchmann. Captain Daeweritz, who was the only skipper she ever knew, had a financial interest in her, too.

The FORESTER, 204 feet from stem to stern and one of a Sanders & Kirchmann fleet of 16 schooners and barkentines, would take on a cargo of lumber in Oregon or Washington—the long, straight fir logs rising to a height of 15 feet on her narrow deck—and beat across the Pacific with it to ports in China or India or Australia. For the return trip, she'd pick up anything she could get in the way of cargo, copra mostly.

"That's what she did until after the First World War," said Captain Daeweritz. "Then, in the 20s, business got bad. Copra, that had been \$42 a ton, dropped to \$10. And the Swedish and Norwegian steamers took all the lumber business away. They could make more trips and make them cheaper than we could."

When her day passed, he bought out his partners' interest in the FORESTER and laid her up. From 1927 to 1931, she was anchored in the strait, protecting a pier of the Carquinez bridge from the swift-running tides. For the four years after that, she was in the Oakland estu-

ary. And when Oakland port authorities told him he would have to move her, she was a menace to shipping there, he had her towed to those Martinez flats, and she's been there ever since.

She makes a snug home for Captain Daeweritz. She's wired for electricity, but has no water; he carries it on board from shore, and catches rain water for washing purposes. In the tiny, skylighted cabin off the sleeping quarters, there was the table at which we sat. On it were the paper he had been reading, a deck of cards and an ash tray from the Turquoise Room, Hotel Rosslyn, L. A. On the bulkhead over the table was a small painting of the FORESTER under full sail, done by an amateur, and the ship's original clock and barometer.

There was a sudden patter of rain on the skylight, and the captain got up at once. "Got to get my washing in," he said. "Should have had it in an hour ago." I followed him up the companionway and on to the deck. He hurried forward, took down a few shirts and towels from a clothesline and hung them up inside, over the stove in the galley.

"What will happen to the FORESTER?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said. "She probably will be burned up some day, like the rest of her kind. I'm the only friend she's got left."

We said good-bye a few minutes later, and he showed me over the side. The rain was coming in heavy gusts from the low gray sky. From the car, Benicia across the strait was dim in the low mist. The FORESTER, listing slightly to starboard, was dark against the green waters of the strait, and her four masts leaned dark against the sky.

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